efficiency of inputs/resources. Similarly, the use of MSP (Minimum Support Prices) operation could help bring diversification to crops/ cropping system suitable under an agro-climatic conditions and land and water resources.

(b) In the report of the Steering Group on Agriculture and Allied Sectors it has been stated that the decreasing investments in agriculture in the form of Gross Capital Formation (GCF), which is affecting the development of infrastructure, productivity, processing and value addition, is an area of great concern.

(c) The Steering Group on 'Agriculture and Allied Sectors', has recommended that if a higher growth rate in the agricultural sector is to be achieved more investments have to be made specially for the development of infrastructure like irrigation, conservation and development of natural resources like water, land and bio-diversity together with the improvement of environment. Besides, public investment in technology, training and trade facilities has also to be enhanced so as to put the agriculture sector on the fast track of growth.

Reduction in regional imbalances

2032. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the action taken to reduce regional imbalance and on creation of infrastructure to prevent migration of people to urban areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): The planning and development of the area and allocation of funds for the purpose are primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government. However, the Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments in the reduction of regional imbalances through weightage in the formula used for distribution of Central Assistance. Further various programmes have been formulated to deal with the special problems of identified areas such as the Tribal Sub-Plan, the Border Area Development Programme, Hill Areas Development Programme, Desert Development Programme/Drought-Prone Areas

Programme, etc. As lack of employment avenues and concomitant poverty are one of the major causes of migration from rural areas, the Government has instituted a number of schemes for self-employment and wage employment in rural areas. These programmes have been strengthened and enlarged to tackle the problem of poverty more effectively. In addition, programmes for building up rural infrastructure have been initiated under the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY) and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). To give a boost to rural industrialisation and to provide benefit to rural artisans and unemployed youth, a National Programme for Rural Industrialisation has been announced with the mission to set up rural clusters. Further, the Integrated Infrastructure Development Scheme was launched in 1994 to facilitate the location of small scale industries in backward districts/rural areas.

Exposing some sectors to FDI

2033. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to open up sectors like retail, real estate, housing, plantations etc. for foreign investment;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the safeguards being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) As per the present policy, FDI is not permitted in retail trade, real estate business, housing (only NRI/OCB investment is permitted) and plantations. There is no proposal for opening these sectors to FDI.

(c) Does not arise.